

operated as they would like to see and that justice demands.

The President of Sri Lanka started talks with the Tamil National Alliance, the party that has won all elections in the northeast since the end of the war more than a year ago. Unfortunately, these talks seem to have bogged down and are not progressing as was anticipated. Sri Lanka is a highly centralized state. The lack of control over areas that we take for granted, such as the police, the use of land, and the education system, are often cited as being one of the causes of the civil war. It is reported that even areas not affected by the war suffer from neglect by Colombo and distant government officials who make arbitrary decisions, as is frequently noted by the World Bank and others. Tensions continue to exist between the Sinhalese, who control the government, and the Tamils, who consider the north and east as their traditional homeland. It is unfortunate that after hostilities ended on the battlefield, they still seem to exist in many of the same ways that occurred before the war actually broke out.

It is my hope that Sri Lanka will be able to work through its difficulties so that this beautiful country can experience the peace and stability its citizens rightly deserve.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker.

#### PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Ken Chroniger, Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church, Alfred Station, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, in this moment, we wait on You. We take a deep breath and try stopping the rush and the hurry of life. For an instant, we ask You to lift the weight of government and the burdens of our role in it from our hearts, minds, and souls. We accept what we read, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

With the pressures of living in the House fishbowl, give grace and mercy to receive favors. Limit the mistakes made simply because we are human. Like those who have preceded within these Chambers, give wisdom to govern. Fill us with faith and hope that what we do here is not running on a treadmill but encouragingly touching the lives of the people at home. Teach us as we serve to care for one another.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. REED led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### WELCOMING REVEREND DR. KEN CHRONIGER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. REED. Today, I welcome to the House Chamber a great individual from our district, Pastor Ken Chroniger. Pastor Ken is the spiritual leader of 70 in my district in Alfred Station, New York, for the Seventh Day Baptist Church there. It is an honor to have Pastor Ken with us.

I have great respect for Pastor Ken, not only for what he does for his congregation, but for what he does for the community, in particular, the baseball games that we have attended together for the youth as they have participated in their summer leagues in Alfred Station.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I welcome Pastor Ken as we from the Southern Tier and the Finger Lakes, the beautiful area of New York, join him in starting off our deliberations here today.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian E. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### HELPING OUR VETERANS FIND JOBS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, for the past 39 months, our Nation's unemployment rate has remained above 8 percent due to the administration's failed policies. Sadly, the average unemployment rate for our veterans is even higher.

Congress has developed a pilot program to help veterans find jobs. Veterans should be prepared to simultaneously meet the same standards and perform the same tasks in the military and industry as in the workplace.

In order to address this issue, Congressman JOE WALSH of Illinois has proposed an amendment for today's National Defense Authorization Act, providing for the Department of Defense to reform the pilot program, helping servicemembers apply the skills learned during their military service to the civilian workplace.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment for servicemembers, military families, and veterans.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

#### 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in recognizing the 20th anniversary of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and of the formation of the Republic's army.

Twenty years ago, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh fought and died for their independence from Soviet Azeri repression and discrimination. From the earliest days of its formation, the Republic's freely elected governmental bodies have built an open democratic society through free and transparent elections. Over the next few days, families of Armenian descent throughout my home State of Rhode Island will honor the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Republic's army and the liberation of Shushi.

Today, the Rhode Island General Assembly will be joined by Mr. Robert Avetisyan, the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to the United States, as they adopt a resolution supporting the Republic's efforts to develop as a free and independent Nation—a fact that many Rhode Islanders take great pride in.

#### CELEBRATING NORWAY'S CONSTITUTION DAY

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, it was nearly 200 years ago that the people of Norway proclaimed their independence as a free nation, and each year on May 17, Norwegians all over the world celebrate the day that their